

was traveling on a commercial flight to Orlando and paying his own way.

Other passengers got off the plane and boarded another flight. O'Keefe stayed in Washington, said NASA spokesman Glenn Mahone.

O'Keefe probably will not make it back to the Space Coast before elections next Tuesday, but Mahone said a later visit was not unreasonable.

"If invited and if time permits, he'll be more than happy to go down because he thinks very highly of Speaker Feeney," Mahone said.

[From Aviation Week & Space Technology, Oct. 28, 2002]

MR. O'KEEFE, STICK TO NASA

Breaking with a long-standing tradition that NASA administrators do not directly participate in partisan politics, Sean O'Keefe has taken to the hustings for Republican candidates and participated in a state party fund-raiser. Last week he turned up in Huntsville to endorse U.S. Rep. Bob Riley in his bid to become governor of Alabama. This week, O'Keefe is scheduled to appear at a political event in Cocoa Beach with Tom Feeney, the speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, who is running in the congressional district that includes Cape Canaveral. O'Keefe will insist he is making these efforts purely as a private citizen. But that is a thin reed to grasp—and one not recognized by the candidates. In a press release, Riley gushed about "having NASA's administrator fly down from Washington to endorse my campaign for governor."

Even more disturbing than running out onto the campaign trail, O'Keefe participated in an Alabama Republican party fund-raising dinner in Huntsville in February. It was billed as a tribute to the aerospace and defense industry, but at \$250-a-plate, the dinner might more honestly have been labeled an occasion for the Grand Old Party to extract tribute from NASA contractors. Want some face time with Sean? Fork over your check.

Lest anyone accuse us of being naive or disingenuous, we are not "shocked, shocked" to learn that O'Keefe is a staunch Republican. Nor do we think there is anything illegal or immoral about a presidential appointee taking part in party affairs, provided it is done on his own time and does not involve government resources.

But that doesn't make these campaign swings and party fund-raising a good idea. Throughout its history, NASA has depended on bipartisan support. It's support that some have characterized as a mile wide but only an inch deep, so O'Keefe should be careful not to drain much off this reservoir of goodwill. In politics, what goes around comes around. And while none of the Democrats running against the candidates O'Keefe is endorsing is likely to turn against NASA should they win, the administrator should not be surprised if Democrats seek a payback and, in so doing, disrupt his plans for this storied government agency.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I wish all of the Senate, all of our colleagues in Congress, as well as the American people, Happy Thanksgiving.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO SENATORS BOB SMITH AND FRED THOMPSON

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, one of the privileges we have of serving in this body is we get to work with a lot of outstanding men and women. I wish

to mention a couple of those who are very good friends of mine, who will be leaving the service of the Senate, one of which is BOB SMITH. BOB SMITH has served in the Senate for 12 years. I had the pleasure of working with him. He is a respected veteran. He served in Vietnam. I have had the pleasure of knowing BOB SMITH and his wife Mary Jo and their kids. Actually, their kids went to the same school as my children did.

BOB was a high school teacher and a coach from the great State of New Hampshire. He was elected to Congress in 1984, but I did not really get to know BOB SMITH until he was elected to the Senate in 1990. He was reelected in 1996. He served on the Armed Services Committee and was what I would call a very strong defender of our Nation's freedom, a very strong national patriot.

He was always interested in improving our national defense and he did an outstanding job. He was a leader in trying to find out what happened to the men and women serving in the Army, Navy, and Air Force who were missing in action in Vietnam. He showed great courage on a lot of issues that were not popular. He led the fight in trying to ban partial-birth abortion, and my guess is we will pass that in the next Congress, and it will be because of the leadership of BOB SMITH and his courageous effort in initiating that.

On behalf of countless unborn children, on behalf of the men and women serving in the military, on behalf of a nation that is very grateful for patriots who have led the fight in Congress to make our country free, they have always had a friend in Senator BOB SMITH. I congratulate him on his years of service in Congress, both in the House and the Senate, and I wish him and Mary Jo every best wish for their future.

I also wish to make a couple of comments about our soon retiring colleague, Senator FRED THOMPSON. Senator THOMPSON's career was shorter than many of us had hoped. He only served 8 years in the Senate. He was elected in a special election in the State of Tennessee 8 years ago, and then was reelected. He has served this body very ably and very nobly well.

Senator THOMPSON had remarkable achievements in his very short Senate career. After he was in the Senate for only 2 years, he was selected and elected chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee, a remarkable accomplishment. He served as chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee at a very interesting time. I was on that committee for a couple of years during the investigation of campaign abuses, primarily focused on the Clinton administration. Chairman THOMPSON conducted those hearings and investigations in a way that deserves great credit. It would have been quite easy to have the hearings evolve into nothing but a partisan allegation, and he did not do that. He conducted

the hearings very nobly, in a very respected manner. I was proud to serve with him on that committee. It was an enormous responsibility to be investigating the sitting President. I believe Senator THOMPSON conducted those hearings very well.

He also, in a very short period of time, was made a Member of the Senate Finance Committee. I had the pleasure of serving with him on the Senate Finance Committee, again, a committee where we were able to make some positive changes for the country regarding tax cuts. Senator THOMPSON has proven to be a real friend of taxpayers in enacting probably one of the largest tax cuts in our Nation's history, certainly in the last couple of decades.

He always provided common sense, a sense of humor, as well. Certainly Senator FRED THOMPSON will be missed in the Senate. He is my friend from Tennessee. I wish Senator FRED THOMPSON and his lovely wife, Geri, every success in the future. No doubt he will have many.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BRINGING SOUTH DAKOTA'S COMPASSION TO AFRICA

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, in August, I had the good fortune to be able to travel with several Senate colleagues to South Africa, Kenya, Botswana, and Nigeria. We wanted to get a clear look at the development challenges in Africa, including health crises, U.S. investment and trade, micro-enterprise development, education and agriculture.

Even before we left, we got a sense of the common cause between the people of the United States and the people of Africa. Working with the South Dakota Red Cross and Hope Worldwide, citizens from Sioux Falls donated more than 1000 pounds of clothes and toys to South African children who have been affected by the AIDS pandemic. I want to publicly acknowledge the great work of Stephanie Koster, director of HIV/AIDS Services for the Sioux Empire Chapter of the American Red Cross, on this effort.

I was overjoyed to be able to deliver, on behalf of South Dakotans, some glimmer of hope to children who have suffered either because one or both of their parents contracted HIV or because they themselves contracted it. In Soweto we met a young girl, Mary, who gave me an indication of the price children are paying as a result of HIV.

Mary is 12 and the eldest of five children. She recently lost both of her parents due to complications with AIDS.